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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9910  
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2683  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0298  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2171  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 001418

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STATE FOR EUR/RPM, EUR/UBI  
OSD FOR DANIEL FATA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/27/17  
TAGS: [NATO](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [NL](#)  
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS EXPECT TO LOWER DEPLOYMENT IN  
AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. USNATO 000428

[1](#)B. THE HAGUE 001340

Classified By: CDA Michael Gallagher, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: While plans are not yet set, and Parliament must then approve, the Dutch indicated their deployment in Afghanistan will probably be extended but at a reduced level. End Summary

[1](#)2. (C) Background: On July 12 the six Dutch ministers responsible for deciding on future deployment gave the go-ahead for military and civilian Dutch officials to start planning and consult in Brussels with NATO on various extension options. On July 25, Dutch NATO Charge Van Der Werff and Col Tack (Dutch MilRep's Office) explained to Ambassador Nuland that they expect the GONL will continue their deployment but with a reduced force presence through 2010, after which they hope to pass their duties in Uruzgan to another nation.

[1](#)3. (C) On July 26, Charg met with Secretary General of the Dutch MFA Philip de Heer about the Dutch plans to extend their deployment in Afghanistan. According to De Heer, the current staff work is focusing not only on the various options but also on their costs. The four major options range from a complete pull-out (which De Heer thought unlikely) to a continuation of the current level of deployment (also not likely). De Heer's comments reflected earlier statements that the Dutch have a budget shortfall of 250 million euros for each of the last two years of the current deployment - and that taken with the political cost - will probably force the Dutch to lower their level of deployment. Given these concerns, the most likely final package adopted by the Cabinet will be a continued leadership role in Uruzgan but with fewer tasks than the current mission. The Cabinet then must submit its recommendation to Parliament for debate and adoption.

[1](#)4. (C) According to De Heer, the most difficult Afghanistan portfolio belongs to Development Minister Koenders. Pressure will mount in Parliament for the second Dutch deployment to include solid development achievements; development efforts so far have been thwarted by Taliban destruction and challenged by a lack of qualified personnel. De Heer said he

was not trying to send the message that the Dutch are any less determined to help Afghanistan, but doing so is anything but easy.

15. (C) De Heer briefly added a further complicating factor facing the government this fall: the EU Constitutional questions. De Heer did not predict the coalition would collapse under the weight of either the issue of continued deployment in Afghanistan or that of the EU Constitution. However, taken together they will render the fall session an unpleasant one.

16. (C) The first of the six ministers, FM Verhagen, will return during the week of August 13, but all six will not be back in the country until the week of August 27. Between August 27 and the Queen,s speech given at the opening of Parliament on September 18, the Cabinet will have to decide what course of action to include in the Queen,s speech. Thereafter the Parliament will debate the deployment, which could easily take till the end of the calendar year.

17. (C) Comment: The Dutch are now doing their homework as well as consulting NATO and allied capitals. The Dutch Charge (ref A) is already suggesting that "the US should express a requisite degree of disapproval once the Cabinet decision is made", so the Dutch Parliament will not try to further cut the new deployment. Our military planners might consider the most important aspects of Dutch deployment and relay those concerns to their Dutch counterparts prior to the Cabinet weighing its options. End Comment.

GALLAGHER